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Navy Psychologist Calls Story About Assassins 'False, Absurd'

LONDON, July 18 (UPI)—A U.S. Navy psychologist denied today as "blatantly false and absurd" a London newspaper report that he told an international conference that the navy trains enlisted men and military convicts as assassins and assigns them to duty in foreign countries.

In Washington, a Navy spokesman also categorically denied the report. (The Washington Post carried a wired service report of the story yesterday.)

Lt. Cmdr. Thomas Narut said in a statement that he had read a published account of his conversation with London Sunday Times reporter Peter Watson "with amazement and disbelief."

"The assertion attributed to me that convicted murderers have been assigned to embassies as assassins is totally and blatantly false and absurd," he said. "In my informal discus-

sions with reporter Peter Watson I briefly discussed theoretical applications, not practical applications."

Narut released the statement shortly after his arrival in London to report to Rear Adm. Donald Enger, deputy commander of U.S. Naval Forces in Europe. Narut was summoned to London from his station at the U.S. Naval Hospital in Naples, Italy.

"In brief I know of no U.S. Navy program, or any U.S. government program, in which personnel were or are trained or conditioned for assassination assignments," Narut said, "and any other interpretation is false."

A Navy spokesman in Washington said, "the Navy categorically denies that it is, or ever has been, engaged in psychological or any other type of training in personnel as assassins."